

The University of Chicago

THE ORGANIZING
AND CONSERVING FORCE OF THE
CHURCH IN SOCIAL CHANGE IN
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
AND ETHICS

1932

By

LINDEN SEYMOUR DODSON

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CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE CHURCH ORGANIZES AND CONSERVES PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE AS IT FUNCTIONS IN COOPERATION WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE ECONOMIC, SCHOOL, AND FAMILY LIFE OF SOUTH HOLLAND

We have seen how this study arose out of a desire to find the answer to three questions: (1) why the church is such a significant institution in the life of the Dutch community of South Holland; (2) why the personal organization and adjustment of the people of this village seemed to be well-developed in relation to that of the people of neighboring villages; (3) how South Holland is able to resist the disorganizing influences of Chicago which neighboring villages have not resisted.

The church life was found to bear an important relationship to the other major areas of life. In successive chapters this relationship has been shown. It was found that the church both modifies and is modified by the cultural heritage of the village. The element in the cultural heritage most influencing the church is Calvinism and the element of church practice which most strongly influences the cultural heritage is the church's perpetuation of the Dutch language in its services.

The church probably influences the economic life of the village most by its Calvinistic teachings of industry, thrift, and self-discipline. On the other hand, the church is profoundly influenced by the economic life of the people since the church, as any institution, must build its program with some regard for the financial support which the economic life provides. That is to say, that churches have to be financed the same as any

other institution.

The church influences the school life by actually making possible the Christian school and standing squarely behind the public school in innumerable ways. All of the school board members and school-teachers are active church members. The school probably contributes most to the church by providing its children and young people with the kind of an education which makes for Christian character and intelligence.

The church and the family stand closely related at so many points that it is difficult to say just which contacts are most vital. The church probably serves the family best by conducting the regular church services each Sunday morning. The church also comes very close to the family in such experiences as baptism, marriage, illness, and death. The family probably affects the church most be rearing the young people who will constitute the church of the next generation.

Not only is the church interrelated to each one of these four factors independently but each factor is related to all of the other four; for instance, the economic life is related to the cultural heritage, home, and school life; the family is related to the cultural heritage, economic, and school life. That is to say, community life is a continuum.

As the church conditions each of these areas of life in the village and in turn is conditioned by them, it does something else at the same time. It organizes and conserves personal and community life. Now this organizing and conserving of personal and community life may be a by-product of the church's interplay with these other factors but if this be true, the by-product is a most important one. A disorganized personality or a disorganized community lays its breast bare to any and every adverse wind which circumstance hurls against it. A personality or a

community must be in a state or organization before it can be conserved. Organization in personal and community life is an absolute prerequisite to the conservation of that life.

It is fully recognized in the beginning that whatever organizes and conserves personal life will also organize and conserve community life. The basic pattern of thought throughout this chapter is the individual in the group. It is obvious that none of these five factors mentioned organize only personal life while other factors organize only community life. However, for the sake of clarity, an attempt will first be made to show how the church, operating in concert with the cultural heritage, the economic, school, and family life of South Holland, organizes and conserves personal life. Next, an effort will be made to show how the church, operating with these same factors, organizes and conserves community life. The reader is reminded again that the writer holds no brief for a sharp line of demarcation between those factors which organize and conserve the personal as over against those which organize and conserve the community life. For instance, does the school primarily organize and conserve personal or community life? It is obvious that if the school is true to its function, it organizes and conserves both personal and community life.

HOW THE CHURCH ORGANIZES AND CONSERVES PERSONAL LIFE AS IT FUNCTIONS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE ECONOMIC, SCHOOL, AND FAMILY LIFE OF SOUTH HOLLAND

THE CHURCH AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The first way in which the church and the cultural heritage, working together, organize and conserve personal life, is, by the church utilizing that part of the cultural heritage known as the family mores. The Dutch immigrant farmers who

settled South Holland according to their family mores, married young, and by industry and thrift reared large families and established their own homesteads as early in life as possible. This behavior pattern has been followed generation after generation in the Netherlands and has not been materially changed in America. This type of family life has done much to socialize the members of the family. A socialized person is one whose personality is not only organized but conserved in the face of the frictions and irritations of life. The church recognizes this service which the family renders its members and continually encourages the establishment and maintenance of families.¹

The second way in which the church by joint action with the cultural heritage organizes and conserves personal life is through the Christian school.² The Christian school had its rise in the Netherlands when the Calvinists and Roman Catholics came to feel that the State schools were godless. The Christian school tradition is an integral part of the Dutch heritage. The first period of the morning in the Christian school is devoted to religious instruction. The school opens and closes with prayer and grace is said at lunch time. Next to the family, the church is the strongest ally of the Christian school. Thus it is through religious instruction and the development of the right attitudes toward God that the church, working through the Christian school, conserves and organizes the personal life of the students.

A third consideration is the Dutchman's traditional

¹For an excellent discussion of the influence of family life upon the individual, see Pitrim A. Sorokin, Carle C. Zimmerman, and Charles J. Golpin, "Familism," Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology, II, 1-123.

²For a discussion of the Christian School, see Chapter VII, pp. 137 ff., of the complete dissertation, to be found only in the University of Chicago Libraries.

battle against the forces of Nature. In the Netherlands it was the almost superhuman task of holding back the sea from engulfing his home and lands; while in America it has been wresting a living from the soil in the face of storm, wind, and insect pest. In his native Netherlands his church gave him courage for this fight against his ancient enemy, the sea, for does not Calvinism exploit the biblical injunction to subdue the earth? In his incessant battle against Nature, he was prompted by economic necessity and given morale by the church. This battle has done something to the Dutch character. It has organized it for action and conserved it in the face of incessant struggle.

There is yet a fourth way in which the church in South Holland has joined hands with another element in the Dutch culture to organize and conserve personal life. This fourth element is the habit of church attendance and support. Before the Dutch people came to America they had been trained for generations in Calvinism which lays great emphasis on church attendance and support. These habits founded a new church on the prairies of Illinois as early as 1853. From the church's inception in South Holland in 1853 to the present time, it has called the people together to worship on Sunday and to share their experiences vicariously at other meetings through the week. The church's contribution to the integration of group life in South Holland has been immeasurable! It is the one institution above all others which has organized and conserved both personal and community life.

It is common knowledge that the adjustment of an individual to a group consists in part in the individual's ability to establish and maintain status in the group. For each individual there is a small group before whom he wishes to make a good showing. In contemporary America status is almost wholly a

matter of wealth. The man whom society recognizes is the man stamped with the dollar mark. Not so in South Holland. The churches are the most prominent institutions in the village and deference is always paid consistory members who are, of course, the church leaders. Anyone in the village may become a consistory member whether he be the butcher, baker, or candle-stick maker. The basis of choice seems to be Christian character and church loyalty and not financial position. Thus the way is open for anyone in the village to establish status by means of church leadership and to establish status is to aid in organizing and conserving personal life.

Belief in God has been the organizing principle of life for the Calvinistic Dutch immigrants who settled South Holland. The church, by utilizing this element in the Netherlander's cultural heritage, has furthered the process of organizing and conserving the Dutchman's personal life. This fifth method fostered by the church is of extremely great importance. Abraham Kuyper said that the Calvinist lives within the Divine presence. The people of South Holland are just as sure of God as they are of the ground upon which they walk. A book rationally examining the premises upon which a belief in the existence of God is based, would have no sale in South Holland. They accept God as they accept the air and sunshine. This unquestioned belief makes for certainty and certainty makes for the organization of personality.

HOW THE CHURCH AND THE ECONOMIC LIFE WORKING TOGETHER ORGANIZE AND CONSERVE PERSONAL LIFE

One of the tenets of Calvinism is that economic and spiritual salvation come by way of hard work, frugal fare, and self-discipline. Not only is the South Hollander interested in civic and religious freedom but he is interested in economic

freedom as well. The Reverend Johannes Van Beek points out that indeed the Dutch immigrant ofttimes becomes interested only in his job and his church.³ Thus the drive of economic necessity, supplemented by a religion which encourages thrift, organizes the personality to be sure, but such a personality may be bleak and barren in spots. Abraham Kuyper reminds the Calvinist of the biblical injunction to subdue the earth and this is certainly not the labor for a divided personality. Agressiveness in economic life calls for the organization of personality around a purpose. This purpose to the Dutch mind is to work, save, and own one's own home. The Dutch family which rents its home is considered improvident. All of these aspirations organize the personality about certain very definite economic endeavors.

South Holland is completely surrounded by a fringe of eight industrial towns in each of which there is much unemployment. South Holland's main industry is truck farming which requires much hand labor. There is relatively little unemployment in the community. This is due to the fact that men of all ages can work on the truck farms. A very high percentage of the population belongs to the churches, and church members, having work to be done, are enjoined to give the work to members of their own church, first. This reduces the number of families to which the church must give relief. It will be recognized that unemployment is one of the most insidious causes of personality disorganization and that the certainty of employment has the opposite conserving effect.

The church's encouragement of economic endeavor has helped to give South Holland a standard of living which, in itself, is a great bulwark of organized personality. The family

³Appendix D, Quotation 3, p. 202 of the complete dissertation, to be found only in the University of Chicago Libraries.

has plenty of plain wholesome food and strong comfortable clothing with a few of the frills. It is sheltered in a comfortable house equipped with modern conveniences. There has been little of the debilitating, gnawing, fretful worry about the children having no food to eat and no shoes to wear which has been the unwelcome guest in the homes of many families of industrial areas in these latter days.

Closely allied to this discussion is the church's program of relief for the needy. The poor funds in the South Holland churches are not allowed to either stagnate or dry up. The flow of funds is maintained with as much volume as possible. The deacon, charged with the church's ministrations to the poor, is busier today than he has ever been. But mind you, he carries with him more than food and clothing; he bears a message of friendly goodwill from the church of the living God. He is a member of the church consistory which is charged with both the physical and spiritual well-being of the church's families. As the food is to the body, so the deacon's message is to the spirit. It is a message of assurance that the friendly group, which sends the food, cares and is ready to stand behind the unfortunate family until it can regain its feet. Does this part of the church's economic program organize and conserve personal life? The answer is obvious.

Not only has the standard of living provided for comfortable homes and strong churches, but it has made possible the schools as well. The church, by its encouragement of adequate standards of living, has fastened the school and the school has been an organizing influence in the lives of the future citizens of the village.

One of the ways in which this village has withstood the city is by preventing the desecration of the Sabbath. "What,

the reader may ask, "does this mean beyond the observance of certain puritanical blue laws?" In South Holland, Sunday is a day of physical rest and spiritual nurture. During most of the year the farmer does hard physical labor for ten hours a day and six days a week. He needs one day of rest in seven to maintain his physical health. What is more—his morale—his spirit needs to be fed after a week of toil with the material things of life. Therefore, he goes to church three and sometimes four hours on Sunday and rests the remainder of the day. His holidays are spent in much the same way since the church picnic comes on the Fourth of July and the Missions Picnic on Labor Day. Thus he refrains from the dissipation of his energies by motor trips and enervating amusements on Sundays and holidays.

Finally, Calvinism teaches that there are two ways of knowing God; i. e., through the Scriptures and through Nature. The farmer, in the daily round of his work, has abundant opportunity to know God through Nature. He meets the God of Nature at every turn of the road and conversation with some of these farmers has convinced the writer that they have a speaking acquaintance with this God wherever they meet him.

We have enumerated and briefly discussed eight or nine ways in which the church, functioning in harmony with the economic life of the village, organizes and conserves personal life. Our next task will be to examine the ways in which the church and family work together to serve the same ends.

HOW THE CHURCH AND FAMILY LIFE TOGETHER ORGANIZE AND CONSERVE PERSONAL LIFE

It is no exaggeration to say that most of the people of South Holland spend the whole of their lives in the midst of a friendly group of like-minded people who have common interests.

Baptism is the formal initiation into this group and burial is the formal withdrawal from the group. Both of these events are celebrated with due ceremony by the group. Another important event in the round of life, i.e., the establishment of one's own home is also celebrated by the friendly church group. One of the outstanding characteristics of South Holland is its homogeneity. This is an aid to the personal organization of life.

Other ways in which the church and the family work hand in hand to organize and conserve personal life is through the operation of church discipline and the spiritual examination of the family. As soon as one makes confession and joins the church its discipline begins to operate. This may vary with circumstances from the friendly admonition of one brother by another, to excommunication from the church. Church discipline may easily become operative in the realm of family life for the church frowns upon divorce and all other forms of family disorganization. Domestic infelicity may call for church action. This is a powerful instrument of social control which the church wields. Few people want their domestic troubles to become matters for group discussion.

A third way by which the church and family promote the organization of life is by means of the sympathetic spirit of the consistory which constantly hovers over the family. Not only does the consistory drop a morsel of food to the needy family but it comes to its rescue in times of mental anguish and despair. The spiritual examination of the family, conducted once each year by the minister and one elder, is a time when stock is taken of the spiritual and mental welfare of each member of the family. In the event of a vacancy in the local pastorate or when the church is so large that the minister cannot make the rounds each year, two elders carry on with the examination. This

is a time when any questions of doubt or confusion may be freely talked out with the minister. Just a line from the prayer of the minister of the Second Christian Reformed Church, on September 18, 1932, expresses the thought we have in mind: "O God, may the minister, elders, and deacons of this church lead this flock into the green pastures of the spirit." This prayer from the lips of some of our city ministers would mean little or nothing but in South Holland the prayer rings true to reality for the congregation is conscious that this spiritual leadership is being exercised by the elders.

A high percentage of the South Holland families attend church at least once each Sunday and occupy their family pew. The writer is conscious of the current criticism about children listening to doctrinal sermons which they do not understand; but there is something in this process which they do understand and that is their parents' attitudes toward the church and toward God. Is it not worth something for the family to have the common experience of church attendance? Furthermore, the spiritual diet of the whole family is scriptural and doctrinal. The Heidelberg Catechism is the fountainhead of doctrine for the family. It teaches of man's sins and miseries, the mode of deliverance, and man's gratitude for this deliverance; a complete plan of salvation which speaks with authority and certainty. Is not certainty a constructive influence in personality organization?

Furthermore, the family altar in South Holland is lighted thrice daily—that its incense of prayer may rise to the Giver of Life. Would that the writer had words to express the sense of well-being, of peace, of rest, of harmonious adjustment to God and man which have come to him as he has broken bread in the summer's quiet of a Sunday evening with a farm family. Not only were the younger children around the table but the older married

ones came to complete the family circle. After grace is said and the meal is eaten, the father draws from beneath the table the family Bible, dog-eared and scuffed from the use of many years. After he has read a portion of Scripture, he closes the meal with prayer for God's blessing upon the family until it comes together again. Further evidence of what the family altar means to the Dutch family is given in these words from the life history of one of their young men:

"I am also sure that the family altar in which my dear father particularly rejoiced, for his God-given office as such unto his children, was the fundamental basis for the maintenance of our happy home."⁴

Compare these two Dutch families, if you will, with another family just fourteen miles away, in Chicago. The following clipping from The Chicago Daily News of October 24, 1932, speaks for itself:

"Harold Forbes, 10 years old, of 6119 Stewart avenue, one of seven children, had kissed his mother good-bye last night, thanked his unemployed father, John Forbes, for a quarter he had given him and started for a neighborhood movie theater. A football film was playing and Harold stayed through the second show.

Shortly after midnight, on his way home, Harold started across 63d street at Indiana avenue. A dark sedan crushed him under its wheels and sped on. Passers-by saw the crumpled figure and rushed Harold to the St. Bernard hospital, where he died a half hour later without regaining consciousness.

His mother went to the Englewood station when he failed to return home. Police sent her to the hospital. She collapsed in the arms of a nurse when she looked at the still form on the bed.

Held for the inquest was Richard Zimmerman, 20 years old, 6417 South Racine avenue, traced by Sergt. Earl Cook of the Woodlawn police through license numbers attributed to the hit-and-run motorist.

Zimmerman's car was spattered with blood in the front, the fender dented and the headlights smashed."

It is unthinkable that such personal disorganization and actual personal destruction could likewise befall a child in South Holland. In the first place, the little boy would probably

⁴Appendix E, p. 205 of the complete dissertation, to be found only in the University of Chicago Libraries.

not have been going to a movie, and if he had, it would not have been on Sunday night. He would not have been allowed out alone at midnight at the age of ten. Then, there is the young man. Such utter disregard for human life. Where could you find a single young man in South Holland, age twenty, who under any circumstances would run down a child and never stop to pick it up? What makes the difference? One answer is that in South Holland life is lived on a personal plane while in the great city it may become very impersonal and absolutely blind to personal values. A regard for personal values organizes and conserves personal life.

The question may arise as to whether the doctrine of absolute predestination does not lead to fatalism and thus personal disorganization? Such might easily be the case were it not that some of these Calvinistic ministers know how to temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Mr. N——was once talking with a minister who had just finished a sermon on predestination. The minister said, "Nick, do you believe it?"

"No, I do not believe it any more than you do. If a man believed that he would fly against the wall (surrender to fatalism). The elect are supposed to know by their heart that they are the elect, but that is no test for we can make ourselves believe most anything. Of course, I believe in predestination since it is in the Scriptures, a man would be a fool not to, but much depends upon how it is interpreted!"

Here we have a rural philosopher who interprets predestination in such a way that it would be acceptable to a Universalist; but the point is, he interprets it in such a way that he may feel the assurance of election rather than the defeat of fatalism. The minister in question was wise to let this explanation stand.

Finally, the church has a program designed to give the whole family at least one social contact a week outside of the

church service and the catechetical classes. There is the Men's Society and the Women's Society, the Young Men's Society, the Young Women's Society, the Junior and Senior Girl's Clubs, and the Junior and Senior Boy's Clubs. In addition to these is the Choral Society, the band, orchestra, and the Sunday School-teachers' meetings. The point is that the program is for all. This provision for the social life is no small item in the organization and conservation of personal life.

HOW THE UNITED EFFORT OF CHURCH AND SCHOOL ORGANIZE AND CONSERVE PERSONAL LIFE

The members of the school board in South Holland are all active Christian laymen. They would never have been elected to the school board had they been indifferent to the church. The teachers are all active church members, many of whom teach in the local Sunday Schools. As has been pointed out in the chapter on the schools, these teachers are quick to drive home a religious truth whenever the occasion arises. The children of a seventh-grade class in literature, which the writer visited, were not allowed to pass lightly over the fact that the crew of the "Golden Mary" repeated the Lord's Prayer as the ship sank and that likewise the band of the "Titanic" played "Nearer My God to Thee" as that great vessel plunged into the deep with its hundreds of lives.

The whole process of education is designed to strengthen the character of the children. To aid them in making successful adjustments and thus becoming socialized individuals. To this end the Bible is read and prayer is offered daily in three out of four schools in the South Holland community.

HOW THE CHURCH ORGANIZES AND CONSERVES COMMUNITY LIFE
AS IT FUNCTIONS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CULTURAL
HERITAGE, THE ECONOMIC, SCHOOL, AND FAMILY
LIFE OF SOUTH HOLLAND

The task of this chapter so far has been to show how the church, working in harmony with other factors in the community, has organized and conserved personal life. The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to the way the church acting in concert with these same factors, organizes and conserves community life. For the sake of clarity, the organization of personal and community life have thus been treated separately.

WAYS IN WHICH THE COORDINATION OF CHURCH LIFE AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE ORGANIZE AND CONSERVE COMMUNITY LIFE

In Europe, unlike America, few farmers live in the open country. Instead of being isolated in the center of a great farm with neighbors sometimes miles away, the European peasant farmer lives in little rural villages or hamlets. Instead of living an individualistic life, as the American farm family is often forced to do, the European farm family is a part of a small community. The European goes from the village out to the land; while the American farmer steps from the back door onto his land. Naturally, when the Dutch immigrants came over to seek homes on the Illinois prairies, they did not scatter all over the landscape but settled in a village, after their manner of life in the Netherlands. The church in South Holland has capitalized this gregarious spirit and encouraged the new immigrants to stay within range of the church, which is the center of the social as well as the intellectual and religious life of the village. This habit of living in colonies has doubtless saved the Dutch immigrant countless hours of loneliness and possibly discourage-

ment which he might have experienced living in isolation from his fellows. This desire to live close together has been a factor in the organization and conservation of community life in South Holland.

Not only has the Dutch immigrant settled in colonies but such settlement has kept alive the nationality consciousness of the group. The church has lifted her voice to ask the people how they will maintain their nationality consciousness. She has answered her own question by suggesting the establishment of schools. This, the people under her guidance have done, until today the Christian Reformed Church has a complete system of secular and religious education which extends from the first grade through the theological seminary. Thus nineteen years of training have been provided for those who will avail themselves of it. "The influence of the Christian school in organizing and conserving the life of the Dutch community has been immeasurable," states Amry Vandenbosch.

Furthermore, the church has held a pivotal position in social reform in South Holland. It has constantly held before the people the fact that Calvinism is not only a system of theology but a middle-class movement for the reform of political, economic, and social life as well. One Dutch minister hurled this at his people in a sermon which the writer heard:

"In the past you have been altogether too much concerned with the fine points of doctrine and not enough with Christian conduct."

In this Chicago suburb (which is not South Holland) the same minister has been one of the leading spirits in cleaning out and keeping out the bootlegging joints.

In Chapter I, it was shown how each of the industrial towns surrounding South Holland has succumbed to one or more disorganizing forces which have their base of operations in the city

of Chicago. These debilitating forces are the saloon, commercialized amusement, prostitution, Sunday golf, unwarranted real estate subdivision, and the desecration of the Sabbath. Not one of these forces of social disintegration has laid its hand with any vigor upon South Holland, in a generation. They have from time to time felt of the fiber of the community's life and found it tough—offering strong resistance. The South Hollander knows that alcohol is a poison and that poison kills; he knows that men cannot play golf on Sunday morning and attend church at the same time; nor can boys caddy on Sunday afternoon and attend Sunday School, too. He knows that he wants his acres for a homestead and not for speculation. He knows that Calvinism is against the theater in all of its forms including the oftentimes worse than useless movie; he knows that his church discipline will not allow him to desecrate the Sabbath and still maintain his moral status in the community. He knows that prostitution coarsens and brutalizes human beings. He has no sons and daughters to sacrifice to this enemy of health and character. Knowing all of these things, where does he get the moral courage to stand against them? Ah, reader, here is the key to his power of resistance—he gets it from the closely knit religious group of which he is a part. That group which is such a powerful agent of social control that he cannot and dare not violate its mores if he cares anything for his self respect and the respect of his fellow men. What is more, his family will have to share the ignominy of any anti-social act which he may commit. If he stops to reflect at all, he realizes that the price he would have to pay would be too great. Does his church, functioning in concert with this set of mores which he has inherited, act as an organizing force in community life? The answer seems to be unqualifiedly in the affirmative.

From the days of the dim past, when the ancestors of the

Dutch, the Batavi, stood unconquered before the legions of Rome to the present time, the love of civic and religious freedom has burned in the breast of the Hollander. This love of civic rights and political freedom led the Netherlands to be the first country of Europe to win its right of sovereignty from Philip II, son of Charles V, the strong emperor who held the whole of Europe in his mighty grip. Later, in 1834, this same love of religious freedom led to the Act of Separation which gave the Separatists of Holland a church free from the bonds of state control. It was these Separatists who settled South Holland in 1847-49. The freedom of the Reformed church has been bought with the blood of many martyrs. This church is not going to let her people forget this precious part of their cultural heritage. The free church and the people have stood together throughout the whole long, bloody, stubborn fight, and they are standing today against the forces of deterioration and disorganization which descend upon their village from their big neighbor—the city. These people have been reared upon a theology "with some iron in it," to use the words of the late Gerald Birney Smith. This fact is abundantly attested by the solidarity of their community life and the character of their clean, strong young people.

MEANS BY WHICH THE CHURCH AND THE ECONOMIC LIFE COOPERATE
TO ORGANIZE AND CONSERVE COMMUNITY LIFE

Let us turn again to Calvinism—that source from which springs the action of so much of South Holland's life. Calvinism made it honorable to make money provided some restraint is exercised in its use. It has not only given its sanction to making money but it encouraged thrift which makes private capital possible. This private capital in most instances has been used in the establishment of a homestead. The manner of gaining a

livelihood is conducive to community organization. First of all, South Holland is "The Home of the Onion Set." This common industry gives all of the people a common interest a language which they can all understand. South Holland knows that it raises more onion sets than any other community in the United States and it takes great pride in this fact. This experience in itself has a great organizing effect on the community. "But where," it may be asked, "does the church function in this connection?" The answer is--by the dissemination of Calvinism which, in a very real sense, is the religion of the economically self-sufficient.

The very manner of gaining a livelihood is conducive to church attendance and support. The truck gardener has no home chores on Sunday morning to keep him from the nine o'clock church service. He has no feeding and milking to speak of. In the second place, he does not commute and consequently does not have the commuter's alibi for "puttering" around the house on Sunday morning. A third fact is that the height of the church season (from Christmas to Easter) is the slackest time in his year's work. He has time to participate in church activities. When it is remembered that the church is the social and intellectual center of his world, it is apparent that the church joins hands with the manner of life of the truck farmer in such a way that community life is organized and conserved.

The community is stable--financially and vocationally. About 60% of the workers are farmers and the per cent of farmers among the church officers is the same. Furthermore, the church rests on a broad financial base. Among city churches it is common for the highest 10% of the contributors to give from 40-50% of the church's receipts; while in South Holland the highest 10% of the contributors give in no case more than 30% of the

church's receipts. It has been truly said that the Calvinistic Dutchman is never niggardly in the support of his church.

Finally, the practice of setting aside one day in seven for rest and refreshment of body and spirit gives the South Hollander a vantage point for social criticism. Here, Hocking's principle of alternation comes into play. The farmer has been thinking about and dealing with particulars throughout his working week. On Sunday, when his spirit takes flight to the realm where the saints are preserved in the faith and in solid comfort, he has gained the high ground where he can see the things of this life in truer perspective.⁵ He can see what his village should do and what it should do without; what issues bearing on community welfare he should support and those he should reject. Vigorous social criticism is one of the most constructive forces in any community, for it keeps the leaders and members of the community alike--alert to what is taking place in the community. Thus the economic life necessitates a day of rest in seven and the church utilizes this day to turn the peoples' thoughts toward the City of God of the future and of the present.

HOW THE CHURCH COOPERATING WITH THE FAMILY ORGANIZES AND CONSERVES COMMUNITY LIFE

There are a number of important ways in which it is believed the church and family, by concerted action, preserve the community. First, is the church's encouragement to rear children. The mores of the people encourage the rearing of children. Little suggestions dropped now and then reveal this fact. For instance, the writer, in company with his seven-year-old son, was attending the Fourth of July picnic given by one of the churches.

⁵"Of the Perseverance of the Saints," Canons of Dordrecht, Articles nine and ten.

The minister, accustomed to seeing the writer alone, asked, with a genial smile and a twinkle in his eye, "Is this your boy?" When he was told that the boy was an only child, the old minister remarked, "Well, he is a fine beginning." Frequently in conversation with parents about their families, the writer would make some remark about his son and the question almost invariably came, "Is he all that you have?" Further evidence is given of the church's encouragement of family life in the chapter on the family.

There is a great deal of intermarriage between the families of the congregations. After three or four generations most everyone in the village is related closely or remotely to everyone else. For instance, the Gouwens family now consists of about seven hundred relatives. Thus the village is not only tied together by many common interests but also by the bonds of blood relationship. This, in itself, is an organizing and conserving force in community life.

The priest father holds his family together by its common loyalty to the family altar and also by his capacity as manager and economic advisor to the family, after he has retired from active labor in the fields. By holding his family intact, he holds the community together.

All of the baptisms, marriages, and burials of some families (for three and four generations) have been performed by the same church. The church thus becomes a place for the most sacred ceremonials of the family. All of the most significant experiences in the family's life are intimately associated with the church. These ties tend to hold the people in the community and keep them loyal to the idealism nurtured by the church. The reader is reminded that the school children of South Holland placed loyalty to church and family as the most desirable traits

in a father and mother; while the "Middletown" children placed loyalty to family in a much higher category than loyalty to church. This reflects the attitudes of the children toward the church. One factor which doubtless holds the young men to the community is the example of their fathers. It is a part of the mores for the men to attend church and actively engage in its program. Thus they set an example for their sons which is a factor in holding the young men to the community. One of the surest signs of the virility of any community is the number of young people it holds. The church's use of holidays has already been mentioned. This is another way the community is held together—that is, it enjoys playing together.

Another way in which the church and family work together to preserve the community is by the use of the Dutch language. One-third of the church services of South Holland are held in the Dutch language. This is the language the mother and father frequently use in their conversation. This circle oftentimes includes the older children of the family but seldom the younger ones. A common language is generally considered as one of the integrating forces in the life of any group. Language unquestionably helps to hold the Dutch community intact and language is preserved almost wholly by church and family usage.

Finally, the most dramatic and probably the most effective way a sense of community is established, is by means of the quarterly communion service. The minister addresses his people as "Beloved Congregation in the Lord." He reminds them that Jesus is the Shepherd and they are his sheep; elected to follow him in this life and abide with him "as the ages of eternity roll." The seating arrangement in the service is such that a very sharp line is drawn between those who belong to the flock of Jesus and those whose privilege it is yet to belong. Another

stimulus for making confession and joining the church is provided by the fact that the communion service cuts squarely across family lines, separating the father from his son and the mother from her children. The ties of the Dutch family are strong but never so strong as when the family is united in Christ and sit together as guests at his table. The communion service adds immeasurably to the group-will to live. In these many ways, the church and family help organize and conserve community life.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH AND SCHOOL ON THE ORGANIZATION
AND CONSERVATION OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The teachers of the public and Christian school help transmit the orthodox Christian culture to the younger generation. Probably the most direct means of indoctrination of the young is through the catechetical class, but both the Christian and public schools are also means of indoctrination in not only church doctrine but in the doctrines of the Dutch-American culture as well. Thus the schools organize the community by transmitting a common culture.

In the late spring of 1932, the Christian Endeavor Society of the Reformed Church held its Alumni Banquet in the dining-room of the new Roosevelt School. The churches not infrequently use the school dining-room for similar social functions which draw the community together and consequently strengthen the bonds of fellowship. The school, to only a slightly less degree than the church, is a social center for the Dutch community.

One of the most disorganizing practices which any rural community can engage in, is to educate most of its young people away to the city. All too frequently the American village has carefully reared its sons and daughters; then sent them away to college, never to return, as though it had no further use for

young people. This is a sure means of suicide for any community. The baneful results of this practice upon a village just north-west of Chicago have been recently shown.⁶ The picture is not an inviting one. South Holland shows a 2% decrease in her 15-24 age group compared with the United States but she comes back with an excess in the 25-34 age group which is the age of the establishment of homes. Further evidence has been presented in Chapter VII to show that from one-third to one-half of the eighth-grade graduates do not enter high school but start to work instead. Upwards 90% of the young people remain at home until they are married. A considerable number of the college graduates have returned to make their homes in the village and are leaders in the professional and civic life of the village. The church has helped to check the movement of young people away from the village by aiding in making church, home, and community life as attractive as possible. The ways have been enumerated in which the church has made provision for its young people. Not the least service which the church and school have jointly rendered the community has been to make South Holland a pleasant and congenial place for young people to live and establish their homes.

⁶ C. F. Parker, A Study in the Process of Constituency Depletion as Illustrated in the First Congregational Church, Woodstock, Illinois, unpublished B.D. Thesis, Chicago Theological Seminary, 1932.

